

Remarks

Claims 1, 2, 7-12, 17-19 and 25 are pending and are under consideration.

There are no allowed claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for removing some of the previous rejections.

Claims 1, 2, 7-12, 17-19 and 25 are again rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patel, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,348,736 in view of Mor, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,146,757.

Claims 1, 2, 10, 11 and 17-19 remain rejected as substantially set forth in the non-final Action of July 24, 2006, section 5.

Applicants respectfully rebut these rejections.

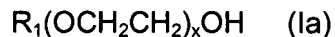
As seen in the Amendment After Final filed Sept. 29, 2005, present claim 1 reads:

1. A wettable polyolefin fiber or filament, comprising a melt blend

which comprises

(a) a polyolefin; and

(b) at least one compound of the formula (Ia)



where x is 2 or 3 and

R₁ is a straight or branched chain alkyl of 28, 30 or 32 carbon atoms.

Mor teaches wettable fibers or filaments comprising a thermoplastic polymer having incorporated therein a first wetting agent and a second wetting agent. The polymer is preferably an olefin polymer. The first wetting agent is at least one nonionic alkoxyated alkylphenol. The second wetting agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of an alkoxyated fatty alcohol and a polyoxyalkylene modified organosilicone polymer. See col. 5, lines 53-64.

The second wetting agent of Mor, the alkoxyated fatty alcohol, has an alkyl group of from 8 to 22 carbon atoms (col. 6, line 32). The alkyl group of the present alkoxyated alcohol has 28, 30 or 32 carbon atoms.

Thus, Mor is deficient towards meeting the limitations of the present claims in the definition of the alkoxyated fatty alcohols.

On this Applicants and the Examiner are in agreement as the prior rejections over Mor have been overcome.

Patel is cited to remedy the deficiencies of Mor. As stated in the Action of July 24, 2006, Patel fails to teach that the fiber or filament comprises a polyolefin and that the long chain alcohol is incorporated into the melt blend rather than applied superficially.

Patel is aimed at stabilized liquid fiber treating and skin treating compositions, for example shampoos, hair conditioners, hair setting compositions, anti-dandruff compositions, fabric softening compositions, antistatic compositions, detergents, skin cleansers, skin lotions and sunscreens (Abstract).

Mor is aimed at nonwoven fabrics for use in, for example, diapers (col. 1, lines 40-46 or col. 13, lines 37-42).

Applicants submit that the wettable fabrics of Mor and the home and personal care formulations of Patel are totally disparate arts. **Thus Mor and Patel are not properly combined.**

In any event, Patel is cited as disclosing treating fibers and fabrics with long chain alcohols, preferably containing 30-40 carbon atoms (col. 3, lines 1-15). Patel teaches that long chain alcohols

are sold under the trade name UNILIN (cols, 3-4). The UNILIN products of Patel are simple alcohols and do not correspond to the present alkoxylated alcohols.

Patel does indicate that corresponding ethylene oxide derivatives of UNILIN alcohols may also be used, that is the UNITHOX commercial compounds (col. 21, lines 41-46 and col. 4, lines 11-20).

The UNITHOX data sheet is of record in this application. The present ethoxylated alcohol corresponds to UNITHOX 420.

Patel generically states that UNITHOX products are useful and specifically points to UNITHOX 550. UNITHOX 550 has a 40 carbon alkyl group and 12.5 ethoxy groups and thus has no overlap with the present alkoxylated alcohols.

Patel teaches ethoxylated derivatives of UNILIN alcohols with up to about 20 ethoxy groups, for example from about 10 to 20 ethoxylate groups (col. 3, lines 50-57). Thus Patel teaches away from the present UNITHOX products as the present ones only have 2 or 3 ethoxylate groups.

The combination of Patel and Mor teach away from the present invention.

Further still, the prior Gande Declaration displayed unexpected wettability properties of the present UNITHOX 420 versus UNITHOX 480 and UNITHOX 750. The Examiner submits that the Gande Declaration is not persuasive in that the comparison is not the correct one based on the Patel disclosure of UNILIN and UNITHOX products.

Patel specifically mentions only one ethoxylated alcohol, that is UNITHOX 550. See col. 4, lines 11-20. Thus, Applicants submit a new Rule 132 Declaration by Dr. Gande. In this new Declaration, present UNITHOX 420 is compared to the one specifically taught by Patel, UNITHOX 550, not of the present claims. UNITHOX 550 has 12.5 ethoxy groups compared to the present 2 or 3 ethoxy groups.

The Examiner states that the combined disclosure in Patel of UNILIN 425 together with the UNILIN data sheet teaching functionalization with 1, 2 or 4 ethoxy groups provides for the present UNITHOX 420. Firstly, the present additives only have 2 or 3 ethoxy groups, not 1 or 4. Patel also teaches "up to 20" ethoxy groups and the UNILIN data sheet also discloses functionalization with 6,

10, 14 or 16 ethoxy groups, resulting in ethoxylated alcohols far outside the present claims. Thus, the disclosure of Patel together with the UNILIN data sheet is generic relative to the number of ethoxy groups. Applicants submit that the comparison to UNITHOX 550 is the only fair comparison.

The ethoxylated alcohols are tested for hydrophilicity in polypropylene nonwoven webs. The polypropylene web with no additive incorporated therein has an average Liquid Absorptive Capacity (LAC) of 29%. The web with 3% of UNITHOX 550 displayed a LAC of 30%. The inventive web containing 3% of UNITHOX 420 displayed a LAC of 74%.

The present Declaration by Dr. Gande, together with the prior one, demonstrate that not any ethoxylated alcohol will provide polyolefin fabrics with superior water absorption or wettability.

The Declaration is unsigned. A signed version will be submitted soon in a supplemental response.

The select compounds of the present invention provide for unexpected wettability results.

The present results are totally unexpected based on the combined teachings of Patel and Mor.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that:

- 1) The combination of Patel and Mor is not proper;
- 2) That the combination of Patel and Mor, if made, teaches away from the present invention;
and
- 3) The select ethoxylated alcohols of the present invention provide polyolefin fibers with unexpected superior wettability properties.

Applicants submit that for each of these reasons, that the present claim rejections are addressed and are overcome.

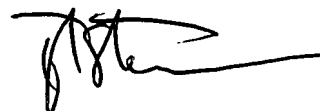
In view of the present Gande Declaration, the prior Gande Declaration and the above remarks, Applicants submit that the 35 USC 103(a) rejections are addressed and are overcome.

Regarding claims 7, 8, 9, 12 and 25, these claims are argued together with claims 1, 2, 10, 11 and 17-19.

The Examiner is kindly requested to reconsider and to withdraw the present rejections.

Applicants submit that the present claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that they be found allowable.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment: Rule 132 Declaration (Dr. Gande, unsigned)

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